

The EPISTLE to the *Monthly* and *Quarterly* Meetings of Friends in *England*, *Wales*, and elsewhere.

From our Yearly Meeting held in London, on the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th Days of the Third Month, 1695.

To our Dear and Tenderly Beloved Friends and Brethren in our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THIS our Solemn Yearly Meeting sendeth Greeting and Christian Salutation, in him, who is our Life, in whom our Living Union, Peace and Safety for ever stands; Blessed, Praised and Renowned be his most Glorious Power and Excellent Name; To whom be Glory and Honour now and over his whole Church and Heritage for ever and ever.

We being really perswaded, you are not Unfensible, that the good and blessed Intent and End of this, and all our *Assemblies*, is (with the Lord's Assistance) for his Honour, in the promoting and maintaining of our Christian Society and Religion, in Life and Practice, in all the Parts and Branches thereof, do not esteem it necessary frequently and expressly to remind you of all Particulars thereof; We therefore Refer you Chiefly to the Faithful Witness of God, and his Truth in your own Hearts, for the Renewing and Continuance of your Godly Care and Concurrence, for the more Effectual Practice and Performance of those weighty Matters and Things heretofore, and now in the Love of God Recommended to you.

Many Living and Weighty Accounts were given to this Meeting from the several Counties in *England* and *Wales*, of the Prevalency and Prosperity of the Blessed Truth, and Progress of the Lord's Work, and the Unity, Peace and Concord, and Increase of Love among Friends; together with the great Convincement, Openness, and Preparation in many People and Places, to receive the Truth in the Love of it: As also of the Addition of several Meetings, and Meeting-houses in some Places, and Friends true Zeal and Care therein: All which were to the great Satisfaction and Comfort of this Meeting.

And this Meeting Desires and Hopes, that you whom the Lord hath Gifted with a Publick Testimony for his Name and Truth, will in this Day of Liberty be diligent to Visit the Heritage of God in their Meetings; and more especially those least frequented.

And from some Forreign Parts; as in *America*, from *Long-Island* and *Road-Island*; and in *Europe*, from *Holland*, *Ireland* and *Scotland*, we have also received good Accounts.

But we have not had particular Advice directed to this Meeting of the late Differences in some Parts of *America*; but hope, things are better there than they have been; yet the Sense, Christian Advice and Counsel given by our last Yearly Meeting to G. K. &c. having been openly slighted and opposed by him in Print, and otherwise: And he manifesting himself to be gone out of the peaceable Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to continue in the same Spirit of Discord and Opposition, whereby he hath given great Trouble and Sorrow to the Church of Christ, and particularly to the last Yearly Meeting, and this also; he is further Testified against, until he unfeignedly Repent, and be Reconciled to Faithful Friends and Brethren; which for his Soul's sake we sincerely desire.

From

Holland, &c.

From *Amsterdam* by an *Epistle* we received Account, that *Friends* are in Peace and Quiet, and *Meetings* kept up, and great Resort thereto in that City : And that there is an Openness to Truth in *North-Holland, Friesland, Embden* and *Frederickstadt* : Our dear *Friends* and Brethren *James Fletcher, Heskin Fell*, and *Roger Haydock*, are going for *Holland* in Truth's Service.

Relief for
Poor Friends.

This *Meeting* having Account of the present Low and Indigent Condition of those *Poor Friends* in the *Isle of Man*, and those at *Dantzick* and *Embsden*, have ordered them some *Supply* for their Relief.

Present Prisoners.

We understand by several Accounts from the Counties this Year, that there remain *Prisoners* on Truth's Account for *Tythes, &c.* to the Number of One Hundred Thirty Four *Friends* ; whose Case being lately presented, and opened to the *King*, by some *Friends* from the *Meeting* for *Sufferings*, had a Favourable Reception and Resentment. Since which the *Act of General and Free Pardon* being come forth, 'tis hoped, that many *Friends*, who are *Prisoners* on *Contempts*, may receive Relief thereby, on Improvement thereof, by duly moving the *Judges* and *Courts* thereupon ; which you are desired not to omit.

Act of Free
Pardon.Of Sufferings
Record.

And it is desired, that the Accounts of Faithful *Friends* Sufferings for the Testimony of Christ Jesus in this Gospel Day, on all Accounts be truly stated and kept on Record ; and also in due time called for, and carefully Examined by Appointment of some Knowing *Friends* from the *Quarterly Meeting*, that they be sent up in due Order and Time ; together with true Copies of the *Warrants, Writs* or *Processes* of *Commitments*, Attested by the *Jaylors*.

Of Judgments
on Persecu-
tors.

And remember the last *Yearly Meetings* Advice, to keep true Records of manifest *Judgments* upon *Persecutors*, and send up Accounts thereof, with your *Sufferings*, (as some have already done) for a Warning to Posterities : And be sure they be well Attested.

Application
to Members
of Parliament.

And it's requisite, to Recommend to the several *Quarterly Meetings*, to take Care, that timely *Application* be made in their respective Counties, (by some sober, discreet *Friends*) to *Members* of *Parliament*, before their coming up to Sit ; giving them right *Information*, and intreating them, that in their Places, they would be pleased to use their Endeavours and Interest for the Ease of our *Suffering Friends*, (as aforesaid) when presented to them in *Parliament*. This Method having been found of Service in some Places, 'tis desired, it may be observed.

Education of
Children.

And it's Desired, and we Judge it meet to remind you, that all *Friends* that are or may be concerned, to take especial Care, in the Name of the Lord, and for his Truth's sake, for the good *Education* and Order of *Friends Children* in God's holy Fear, in the Way of Truth, for their Preservation out of the Snares of the Enemy, and Corruptions of the World. And also

Of Schools, &c.

to see that *Schools* and *School-masters*, who are Faithful *Friends*, and well Qualified, be plac'd and encourag'd in all Counties, Cities, great Towns or Places, where there may be need. And that such *School-masters* (as much as may be) sometime Correspond with one another, for their Help and Improvement in such good and easie *Methods*, as are most Agreeable to the *Truth*, and the Childrens Advantage and Benefit ; and that Care be taken, that *Poor Friends Children* may freely partake of such *Education*, in order to *Apprentiship*.

Of Marriages.

And that all Diligence, Care and Caution be had, that no *Friend*, or *Friends Children* be Betrayed in Affection, or otherwise, nor Join in *Marriage* with those, that are not of our Christian *Profession* and *Society*, nor without the Privy and Consent of *Parents, Guardians* or lawful *Tutors* intrusted with them ; nor with any near *Kindred*, contrary to the Law of God, and wholesom Advice already given them ; particularly by a *Yearly Meetings Epistle* 1675. and otherwise by the Faithful Servants of Christ.

Of Wills, &c.

And that Care be taken to Advise and Stir up all *Friends*, that have *Estates*

states to dispose of, to make due, timely, firm and lawful Settlement thereof by *Will*, or otherwise, to prevent future Trouble and Discord, as heretofore advised: Making such *Wills* in due time, will shorten no Man's Days: But the Omission or Delay thereof has prov'd very pernicious to many, and injurious to Truth.

And Friends, let those Just and Ancient Commands of God be observ'd, Against Tale-bearers, &c.
viz. Lev. 19. 16. *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among thy people:* And Exod. 23. 1. *Thou shalt not raise a false Report:* And Psal. 15. 3. *He that backbiteth not with his Tongue, nor doth evil to his Neighbour, nor taketh up a Reproach against his Neighbour, &c.* 'Tis only such Innocent ones, that shall abide in the Lord's Tabernacle, and dwell in his holy Hill; wherefore in the fear of the Lord stand against all *Whisperers, Backbiters, Tale-bearers, Defamers and Slanders*, and against all *Whisperings, Backbitings, Tale-bearing, Reproaching and Slandering*, and put a speedy stop thereto, as much as in you lyes; for such Works of Darkness and Envy tends to *Division and Discord*; and the Righteous Law of God goes against both the *Authors, Fomenters, Receivers, and Encouragers* thereof. See Prov. 11. 13. and 18. 8. and 26. 22. and 20. 19. and 26. 20. and also 2 Cor. 12. 20.

It's Advised for the Service of Truth, and some Ease to Friends concern'd in the *Printing*, that it be recommended to each *Monthly Meeting* in the Counties, to take off two Books of a sort, as they are newly Printed (under Two Shillings Six Pence price each) for one Year from this time; and one of a sort to a *Monthly Meeting*, that is above that price, *viz.* such good Books, as Truth and Friends allow and approve of: And that they be sent into the Counties *Quarterly*, about two or three Weeks before the *Quarter Day*, by those Friends that Print them. And where Friends have occasion for a greater Number, they may send to the *Printers* for them, keeping one for each *Quarterly Meeting*.

The Friends of the Counties appointed to Inspect the *Accounts*, report, Accounts they have thoroughly viewed them, and find them truly stated, to their Satisfaction: And that they Judge, ~~there will be no want~~ this Year.

Now Dear Friends and Brethren, as we are called and gathered by the Lord his Glorious Arm and Power, to be a People of one Heart and one Way, and to walk before him in true Love and Unity, For Love and Unity. in the peaceably Spirit of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ (who is our Life) our Strength and Safety stands therein, against the Enemy, the Son of Perdition, the Spirit of Antichrist and Division, and against all the Evil Designs and Attempts thereof. Wherefore in the same Spirit of Love and Unity keep, in Peace and Concord; and in Godly Fear and Humility be Watchful against the Enemies Attempts and Assaults on all hands, which will be to the weakning and frustrating thereof. And all be faithful and humbly Thankful to our God for all his Mercies, and for the present Liberty, and blessed Opportunities we do Enjoy; whose refreshing Presence, Power and Counsel, hath greatly attended this our Meeting as at other times. And hitherto the Lord has Helpt, Strengthened and Confirmed us to our mutual Comfort; to his Praise and Renown be it Confess'd and Remembred. And to the Lord our God, and the Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne, be Glory, Honour and Dominion, for ever and ever.

And in the deep Sense of the Love of God, and Unity of his Blessed Spirit, this Conclusion:
 Meeting Concluded for this Year, with the wonted Agreement that this our Yearly Meeting be continued (if the Lord please) and that Friends of each County send at least Two Faithful Friends, to Attend the Service of Truth and Friends as formerly.

Signed in behalf of our said Meeting, by

Benjamin Bealing.

1695

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